

ABSTRACT

A method and apparatus for rapidly assigning traffic channels to a plurality of mobile stations in a wide area high-speed packet data cellular communication system. Mobile stations transmit access probes on randomly selected access channels to selected base stations to initiate traffic channel assignments. The access probe comprises a pilot preamble, a traffic channel request, and a pilot/data request channel (DRC). The pilot preamble allows the selected base station to easily detect the access probe transmission. The traffic channel request includes data that identifies the mobile station. Immediately after transmitting the traffic channel request, the mobile station begins communicating with the base station on both the forward and reverse communication links. The selected base station immediately supervises the mobile station's transmission power. The mobile station selects from a group of available power control sub-channels. The mobile station selects an available channel and an associated power control sub-channel from the list.